



OPERATIONS MEMO

Update of the California Student Aid Commission

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GOM 2008-23

TO: High School Counselors

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SUBJECT: 2009-10 Cal Grant GPA Verification for High Schools

This Operations Memo provides information to high school counselors submitting grade point average (GPA) verifications on behalf of students applying to the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) for the 2009-10 Cal Grant program awards. Please review the enclosed "GPA Calculation Instructions" and the "Questions and Answers for High Schools" for details on preparing the GPAs for your students. **The deadline for submission is March 2, 2009.**

GPA Verification Form Availability

For the 2009-10 application year, the Commission will not pre-print Cal Grant GPA Verification Forms, therefore paper forms will not be available for ordering in bulk. In prior years the GPA verification form, instructions and a mailing envelope were commercially printed and available for order; however, due to severe budget cuts we are not able to provide these forms and ask that you download and print them if you are not electronically submitting GPAs.

The 2009-10 Cal Grant GPA Verification Form is provided as an enclosure to this memo and it will also be available for download from the Commission's Web site at <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1177>.

Along with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the school-certified GPA constitutes a complete Cal Grant application. Applicants who complete the student section of the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form must take it to their school for certification by a school official before sending it to the Commission. The GPA can be provided on the paper version of the form or submitted online by the school.

Electronic GPA Submission

In mid-November the Commission will begin accepting GPA uploads from schools for academic year 2009-10 Cal Grant awards. Electronic submission is secure, fast, and minimizes errors. Since high school GPAs do not include senior year



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grades for graduating seniors, schools are encouraged to prepare and upload their 2009-10 GPAs as soon as possible. GPAs uploaded through WebGrants are certified electronically, so there is no need to fax or mail a separate certification or paper GPA verification form.

The WebGrants GPA function provides immediate feedback regarding the number of GPAs that have been accepted and identifies any errors in the upload. Prior to actually submitting GPAs, schools should review the GPA submission procedures to ensure that their upload is accepted by the Commission. Failure to ensure that the Commission has received the GPA upload will result in students not being deemed eligible for an award.

Schools can use WebGrants, the Commission's secure, online information transfer system, to directly key the GPAs into the Commission's system. If a school would be taking the time to complete a paper GPA form by hand, this time could be used instead to directly key in the GPA to WebGrants. This is quicker, more secure, and saves the student or school the postage of mailing the paper form. The direct online method is easiest if the school has a relatively small number of GPAs to enter. For schools that need to fill out several hundred GPA forms, direct entry would save time over the paper submission method.

Another way that WebGrants can be used by schools to submit GPAs is to create a list to upload them all at once to the Commission. The list can be created in many ways, the most simple is to enter the required data elements in Excel on a line-by-line basis and, prior to submission to the Commission, save the file as a text file.

A user guide on electronically submitting GPAs is available on the WebGrants *Help Center*. To view the guide, log on to WebGrants, click on "Help" in the upper right corner of the screen and look under *User Guides – GPA Screens*. The Commission has recently converted its database, including the GPA submission screens. In the event that you find any system anomalies or screens which do not appear to be correct, please contact us.

To complete the WebGrants registration paperwork, schools can visit the Commission's Web site at <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1191>. For questions on WebGrants registration contact the Commission's Technology Help Desk at (888) 294-0148.

The Commission will be providing electronic GPA submission training sessions via webcast. A memorandum with the training dates and details will be released soon. For assistance in learning how to use WebGrants and for any other questions on GPA submission issues, schools can contact the Commission's School Support Services staff at (888) 294-0153 or schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov. Students with questions should be directed to Student Support Services at (888) 224-7268 or at studentsupport@csac.ca.gov.

We strongly encourage all high schools to upload GPAs electronically. This allows immediate confirmation that the GPAs were accepted and allows students to immediately view their submitted GPAs through "WebGrants for Students." As an alternative, schools may continue to use paper GPA verification forms. Thank you in advance for your assistance this coming year and for your continued efforts to serve students.

Enclosures: 2009-10 Cal Grant GPA Verification Form
2009-10 Cal Grant GPA Calculation Instructions
Cal Grant GPA Questions and Answers for High Schools
High School GDS WebGrants Information Security and Confidentiality Agreement
GDS WebGrants High School System Administrator's Access Request Form
GPA Upload Data File Layout Specifications

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